BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

tel (250) 387-0327
fax (250) 387-0329

All issues since 97-01 are on our website:
http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

Issue: **99-25** 7 Pages
June 25, 1999

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

The Economy

- **Seasonally adjusted exports increased 2.7% between March and April, marking the second straight monthly increase and the sixth time in the last seven months that they have risen.** The improvement was due to continued strength in exports to the US, which were up 5.9% from March.

  Although two-thirds (66%) of BC's exports are destined for the United States, BC's export markets are more diversified than those of most other Canadian provinces. Sixteen percent of our exports are to Japan, while the European Union accounts for 7% of the total. Saskatchewan (64%) is the only province less dependent on trade with the US. American markets dominate Ontario's trade, with 94% of international exports from that province destined for the States.

  Source: BC STATS

- **Retail sales in British Columbia were up 1.3% (seasonally adjusted) in April, marking the fifth time in six months that they have risen.** Sales had reached a hiatus during the last two years, but the recent gains suggest that consumers are beginning to loosen their purse strings. BC, Yukon (+2.2%) and Saskatchewan (+1.0%) were the only regions where sales increased in April. Canadian sales were down 0.4%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The number of employment insurance (EI) recipients in the province decreased 1.1% (seasonally adjusted), to 66,120, in April.** There were fewer EI recipients in most parts of the country, with the number declining in eight of the twelve regions. Nationally, the number of recipients fell 1.6%, to 513,450.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Population

- **British Columbia's population stood at 4.028 million on April 1st, an increase of 0.7% from a year earlier.** This marked the third straight quarter in which the province's population has grown less than one percent.

  Alberta had the fastest-growing population in the country, with a gain of 2.3% during the twelve-month period ending April 1st. Ontario (+1.2%) and NWT (+1.2%) were the only other regions where population growth exceeded the national average of 0.9%. Growth rates in the rest of the country ranged from 0.1% in Nova Scotia to 0.4% in Quebec, Manitoba and PEI. Newfoundland (-1.2%) and Yukon (-3.6%) lost people during the last year, while New Brunswick's population was unchanged from April 1, 1998.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Alcohol Sales

- **Alcohol sales by liquor stores, wineries and breweries in the province were among the highest in the country, when compared to the adult (15+) population, in 1997/98.** Per capita sales reached 103.5 litres, second only to those in Alberta (107.5) and Yukon (178.3). The national average was 99.2, with sales in the rest of Canada ranging from a low of 84.3 litres per adult in Saskatchewan to 103.0 in Quebec. Canadian sales were up for the first time in twelve years, but in BC, per capita sales were lower than in the previous year. The general downward trend in alcohol sales may be partly due to the proliferation of U-brews, which have made it easier for individuals to produce home-made beer and wines. *Source: Statistics Canada & BC STATS*

Report **Tourism Industry Monitor**

Did you know...
In 1997, the average Canadian ate 72 kg (that's 158 pounds)of potatoes, including fries and chips.

- **Beer is the alcoholic drink of choice among Canadians and BC residents, accounting for about eighty percent of total sales by volume.** In BC, the average adult purchased 82.5 litres of beer from liquor stores and other outlets during 1997/98. This was virtually identical to the national average (82.8). We're more fond of wines than most Canadians, purchasing 14.0 litres per adult, well above the national average (10.7), and more than in any other region except Yukon (18.8). Quebec (13.0) was a close third. Newfoundlanders (3.8) were least likely to purchase wines.

  Consumption of spirits was highest in the Prairie provinces, where average sales ranged from 7.7 litres per person in Saskatchewan to 8.0 litres in Manitoba. Most Canadians bought about twice as much wine as spirits, but residents of Atlantic Canada, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and NWT showed a preference for spirits. In BC, sales of spirits averaged 6.9 litres per adult, while the Canadian average was 5.7. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Mortgages

- **A growing number of British Columbians are finding it difficult to meet their mortgage obligations.** The number of bank mortgages in arrears has almost tripled since 1996. Year-to-date, 2,305 mortgagees in the province have missed at least three months of payments. This compares to 1,650 during all of last year, and 876 mortgages that were in arrears in 1996. However, these numbers represent less than one percent (0.6%) of the 376,652 mortgages currently held by banks in the province. The sharp increase in mortgage arrears could be due to many factors, but almost certainly reflects the fact that some owners of leaky condos are choosing to walk away from their homes rather than incur the high cost of fixing them.

  Source: Canadian Bankers Association & BC STATS

Fire Losses

- **Twenty men, seventeen women and four children in BC lost their lives in fires during 1997, seven of them perishing in fires that were intentionally set.** One in three (13) fatalities involved people aged 60 and over.

  Although the number of fatalities increased significantly in 1997 (there were 27 deaths in 1996), there were fewer fires (6,384, down from 7,487) and fewer injuries (373, down from 432). The number of car fires (2,503) exceeded those in houses or apartments (1,966). One in four (1,753) fires was believed to be due to arson.

  Property losses from fires topped $200 million in 1997. Almost half ($95.4 million) of the losses were in 30 fires where more than $500,000 of property was destroyed. The largest fire was in a commercial fishing vessel, which sustained $35 million of damage. A sawmill ($25 million) and an elementary school ($6.6 million) also burned down. Arson or suspected arson was the cause in seven of the 30 large-loss fires.

  Source: Fire Losses in British Columbia in 1997. Ministry of Municipal Affairs

Leonardo da Vinci

- **Ticket sales for the *Leonardo da Vinci–Scientist Inventor Artist* exhibit held at the Royal BC Museum from October 1 to March 6 totalled 416,600.** As a result, museum attendance figures for the winter months were well above usual levels in the off-season. Total spending by the 342,400 out-of-town visitors who came to Victoria to see the exhibit was estimated at $92.4 million. About a third ($32.4 million) of this spending was by people whose main or only reason for coming to the city was to see the exhibit. For one in four (103,320) exhibit viewers, *Leonardo* was their only reason for coming to Victoria, while for another 94,190 people from out of town, the exhibit was their main reason for visiting the city. *Source: Royal BC Museum data*

Seniors in Health Care Institutions

- **Between 1994/95 and 1996/97, just under 2% of elderly Canadians (aged 65 and over) were institutionalized for long-term care**. In 1996/97, half of the 185,000 seniors living in institutions had moved there within the last two years. Among new residents, three out of five had been living in a private household, and two-thirds came because of health problems such as incontinence, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, or other dementia. *Source: Statistics Canada*

highlights, Issue 99-25
June 25, 1999

For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS

Ministry of Finance and
Corporate Relations

Contact: Martin Monkman
Tel: (250) 387-0360
Release: June 1999
Issue: 98-Annual

Tourism Industry Monitor ◆ Annual 1998

1998 Highlights

Tourism growth slows in 1998

- While American visits were up, there was a drop in the number of visits from overseas countries. There was also clear evidence that travel within Canada stagnated. As a result, most tourism indicators exhibited the slowest growth rates seen since the economic slowdown of 1991.

Room Revenue

- British Columbia room revenue grew 3.8% in 1998. Total revenue exceeded $1.2 billion, the highest-ever annual amount.

Hotel Industry

- For the second year in a row, occupancy rates slipped, dropping to their lowest level since 1992 (62.8%). This decline in occupancy reflects an increase in new hotel rooms, particularly in Vancouver and Victoria, and not necessarily a drop in the total number of hotel visitors.
- While occupancy rates dropped, the 1997 average room rate climbed 3.3% to $112.

Visitor Entries

- Total visitor entries by overseas residents fell 9.4% to 1.3 million in 1998. Entries from Europe were up 0.1%, but there was a 16.2% drop in the number of entries by residents of Pacific Rim countries.
- American travellers took 6.5 million trips to Canada via BC, an increase of 650,000 from 1997. Overnight trips made up slightly more than half of the total, and advanced 10.3% in 1998.
- The drop in the value of the loonie kept Canadians close to home. The number of same-day automobile trips by Canadians to the US (the best indicator of cross-border shopping) fell 27.8% to 6.7 million, less than half of the number of trips made in the peak year of 1991.
- Just under 800,000 Canadians returned from a trip overseas via BC (+4.2%).

Transportation

- As was the case in 1997, air passenger traffic was up in 1998. Passenger volume increased at both Vancouver (+4.7%) and Victoria International (+10.1%) airports.
- For the third straight year there were fewer passengers travelling on BC Ferries (-2.9%), while the Coquihalla Highway recovered slightly from a three year slump (+2.1%).

Employment

- In 1998, tourism generated 112,940 jobs. This was unchanged from 1997. By comparison, the number of people working in all industries in BC grew 0.9% to 1.5 million.

Tourism GDP

- Tourist activity in BC generated $4.1 billion (1992 constant dollars) in 1997, an increase of 1.2%.
- Tourism sector GDP for 1998 is unavailable at this time. Constant dollar GDP is scheduled to be published in late 1999, followed by current dollar GDP in early 2000.

Tourism Indicators

Annual Series, 1992-1998

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Tourism Room Revenue ($ thousand)							
BC Total	747,574	794,211	898,678	999,405	1,093,486	1,157,519	1,201,789

Source: BC STATS

Gross Domestic Product ($ million)							
CURRENT DOLLARS							
BC Total	75,332	81,166	87,935	92,361	94,817	97,721	n/a
Tourism	3,552	3,769	4,047	4,323	4,520	4,684	n/a
CONSTANT DOLLARS (1992 dollars)							
BC Total	75,332	78,776	82,045	83,299	84,115	86,027	n/a
Tourism	3,552	3,678	3,858	3,985	4,052	4,101	n/a

Source: BC STATS

Tourism Revenue & Volume Estimates							
Revenue ($ millions)	n/a	n/a	6,717	7,678	8,314	8,510	8,759
Visitor Volume (thousands)	n/a	n/a	19,537	20,719	21,142	21,356	21,769

Source: Tourism BC

Visitor Entries to Canada via British Columbia (thousands of persons)							
USA – Total	4,537	4,636	5,036	5,369	5,494	5,893	6,549
Overnight	2,450	2,466	2,631	2,880	2,883	3,094	3,413
OVERSEAS – Total	775	841	963	1,209	1,412	1,430	1,296
EUROPE	299	330	375	419	468	449	449
Germany	85	103	116	133	134	121	111
United Kingdom	117	127	148	162	188	173	184
PACIFIC RIM	444	474	548	756	895	920	771
Australia	51	51	65	83	89	89	92
Hong Kong	67	67	71	105	130	95	100
Japan	204	220	241	308	342	317	289
Taiwan	26	31	44	76	104	123	111
CANADA – TOTAL (returning to Canada)	18,283	15,949	13,552	13,502	13,710	13,428	10,451
From U.S.A. -- Total	17,819	15,439	12,999	12,920	13,039	12,660	9,652
From U.S.A. -- Same day auto	14,252	12,068	9,993	9,885	9,802	9,329	6,735
From Overseas	464	510	553	581	671	767	800

Source: Statistics Canada, International Travel (66-001)

Employment (annual average)							
BC Total	1,259,170	1,313,100	1,342,940	1,393,190	1,408,520	1,441,670	1,455,140
Direct Tourism Employment	93,870	104,500	104,600	104,680	105,530	112,990	112,940

Source: Statistics Canada (Survey of Employment, Payroll & Hours), BC STATS

Transportation (thousands)							
Vancouver Airport -- arrivals & departures	9,935	10,235	10,831	12,007	14,038	14,819	15,510
Victoria Airport -- arrivals & departures		720	767	820	979	1,103	1,214
BC Ferries -- passengers	20,667	21,219	22,010	22,408	22,193	22,060	21,418
Coquihalla Highway -- passenger vehicles	2,255	2,417	2,504	2,498	2,325	2,316	2,365

Sources: Vancouver Airport, Victoria Airport, BC Ferries, Ministry of Transportation & Highways

Hotel Occupancy & Room Rates (annual average)							
Occupancy (%)	62.4	64.8	66.0	67.7	68.2	66.2	62.8
Room Rate ($)	81.20	82.50	86.50	91.90	99.90	108.45	112.05

Source: Pannell Kerr Forster (Vancouver)

Tourism Indicators

Annual growth rates, 1992-1998

% change from previous year	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Tourism Room Revenue							
BC Total	3.1	6.2	13.2	11.2	9.4	5.9	3.8

Source: BC STATS

Gross Domestic Product							
CURRENT DOLLARS							
BC Total	5.0	7.7	8.3	5.0	2.7	3.1	n/a
Tourism	3.8	6.1	7.4	6.8	4.6	3.6	n/a
CONSTANT DOLLARS							
BC Total	3.0	4.6	4.1	1.5	1.0	2.3	n/a
Tourism	6.4	3.5	4.9	3.3	1.7	1.2	n/a

Source: BC STATS

Tourism Revenue & Volume Estimates							
Revenue	n/a	n/a	n/a	14.3	8.3	2.4	2.9
Visitor Volume	n/a	n/a	n/a	6.1	2.0	1.0	1.9

Source: Tourism BC

Direct Entries to Canada via British Columbia							
USA -- Total	-0.2	2.2	8.6	6.6	2.3	7.2	11.1
Overnight	-0.6	0.7	6.7	9.5	0.1	7.3	10.3
OVERSEAS -- Total	5.0	8.5	14.5	25.5	16.8	1.3	-9.4
EUROPE	4.8	10.5	13.6	11.7	11.6	-3.9	0.1
Germany	10.0	21.1	12.1	14.5	1.9	-9.5	-8.8
United Kingdom	-1.1	8.2	16.7	9.6	15.7	-7.9	6.4
PACIFIC RIM	5.3	6.9	15.5	38.1	18.3	2.8	-16.2
Australia	3.4	0.2	26.5	28.6	6.6	-0.1	4.0
Hong Kong	-1.1	0.4	5.6	48.7	23.2	-26.8	5.7
Japan	6.5	7.6	9.8	27.6	11.1	-7.2	-8.9
Taiwan	16.6	18.0	41.9	73.7	35.6	18.9	-10.0
CANADA -- TOTAL (returning to Canada)	-6.8	-12.8	-15.0	-0.4	1.5	-2.1	-22.2
From U.S.A. -- Total	-7.2	-13.4	-15.8	-0.6	0.9	-2.9	-23.8
From U.S.A. -- Same day auto	-7.7	-15.3	-17.2	-1.1	-0.8	-4.8	-27.8
From Overseas	14.3	10.0	8.4	5.1	15.4	14.4	4.2

Source: Statistics Canada, International Travel (66-001)

Employment (annual average)							
BC Total	0.0	4.3	2.3	3.7	1.1	2.4	0.9
Direct Tourism Employment	1.9	11.3	0.1	0.1	0.8	7.1	0.0

Source: Statistics Canada (Survey of Employment, Payroll & Hours), BC STATS

Transportation							
Vancouver Airport -- arrivals & departures		3.0	5.8	10.9	16.9	5.6	4.7
Victoria Airport -- arrivals & departures			6.5	7.0	19.3	12.7	10.1
BC Ferries -- passengers	2.1	2.7	3.7	1.8	-1.0	-0.6	-2.9
Coquihalla Highway -- passenger vehicles	8.1	7.2	3.6	-0.2	-6.9	-0.4	2.1

Sources: Vancouver Airport, Victoria Airport, BC Ferries, Ministry of Transportation & Highways

Hotel Occupancy & Room Rates (annual average)							
Occupancy (percentage point change)	-1.4	2.4	1.2	1.7	0.5	-2.0	-3.4
Room Rate	-2.9	1.6	4.8	6.2	8.7	8.6	3.3

Source: Pannell Kerr Forster (Vancouver)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Room Revenue

The monthly *Tourism Room Revenue* report published by BC STATS presents room revenue earned by accommodation properties in British Columbia by accommodation category. This report also gives detail on accommodation revenue for development regions, regional districts and selected urban centres in BC.

Gross Domestic Product

Published in the annual *British Columbia Economic Accounts*, the tourism GDP estimate is calculated by BC STATS. The GDP estimate is perhaps the single best indicator of the health of the tourism sector in BC.

GDP is a measure of value added, essentially the difference between the cost of the material inputs used to create a product or service and the price at which it is sold. Thus GDP includes wages and profits, and is therefore an excellent measure of the contribution of an industry to the total value of production.

The "constant dollar" expression means that the GDP values have been corrected for the impact of price changes–inflation and deflation. Reporting data in constant dollars is one way of showing the change in the output of an industry.

Revenue and Volume Estimates

Estimated by Tourism BC, the revenue and volume figures are based on data from earlier visitor studies (notably *Visitor '89* and Visitor'96) that have been inflated based on other travel indicators.

Visitor Entries

Entry data is tabulated and published monthly by Statistics Canada based on person-trips through Canadian border crossings. A single person-trip is recorded for each time a person crosses through customs into Canada. Canadian residents returning from trips outside the country are also included.

Visitor entry data does not count the number of unique persons but the number of person entries. As well, trans-provincial travel is not accounted for in the data.

The number of "same-day-auto" Canadian residents returning from the United States is a key indicator of cross-border shopping behaviour.

Statistics Canada publishes these data in *International Travel* (Catalogue 66-001).

Direct Tourism Employment

The estimate of direct tourism employment is calculated by BC Stats. The estimates are generated by apportioning a percentage of total employment in various industries to the tourism sector. Estimates of the tourism share are determined on an industry by industry basis, then applied to employment data for each industry.

The source of the employment data is Statistics Canada's Survey of Employment, Payroll and Hours (SEPH), an employer survey.

For further information, see the report *Direct Tourism Employment*, available from the BC STATS website (www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca).

Transportation Volume

Monthly passenger arrival and departures are tabulated at Vancouver International Airport and Victoria International Airport. For Vancouver, the data is also available for travel volume between Vancouver and points in Canada, the United States, and overseas. While BC STATS gets this data directly from the airports authorities, Statistics Canada compiles annual tables of the data published as "Air Passenger Origin and Destination, Domestic Report" (Catalogue 51-204) and "Air Passenger Origin and Destination, Canada - United States Report" (Catalogue 51-205).

The Coquihalla Highway (Highway 5) is the most popular route connecting the southwestern part of the province with both the BC interior and other provinces via Highways 1, 3, and 5. Monthly Coquihalla Highway traffic counts are tabulated by the Ministry of Transportation and Highways, and represent the number of passenger vehicles passing through the toll-booth at the summit of the Hope to Merritt segment of Highway 5.

The BC Ferry Corporation gathers data on the number of vehicles and passengers carried on each of the routes in the system. Detailed monthly data for each of the routes in the system is available.

Hotel Industry

Pannell Kerr Forster's monthly *Trends In The Hotel Industry* tabulates occupancy and room rates for key communities in BC.

For more information, contact Martin Monkman at
phone: (250) 387-0360
e-mail: Martin.Monkman@gems7.gov.bc.ca

Infoline

June 25, 1999

fax transmission information service from **BC STATS**

also on the Internet at http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,028.3	0.7
Canada	30,482.9	0.9
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	1997	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	109,347	3.3
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	98,201	2.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,775	0.1
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,340	-2.3
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Apr	2,961	8.5
Merchandise Exports (raw) Apr	2,345	11.5
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Apr	2,788	-0.5
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
(all items - 1992=100)	May '99	% change on one year ago
BC	111.1	0.7
Canada	110.4	1.6
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	May '99	% change on one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,062	0.7
Employed - BC	1,889	1.9
Unemployed - BC	174	-10.9
		May '98
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.4	9.5
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	8.1	8.4
INTEREST RATES (percent)	June 23/99	June 24/98
Prime Business Rate	6.25	6.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.75	6.55
- 5 year	7.45	6.95
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	June 23/99	June 24/98
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4733	1.4697
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6792	0.6803
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Mar '99	% change on one year ago
BC	619.13	1.1
Canada	605.14	-0.1

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

Tourism Industry Monitor

This week's Report consists of our annual summary of the tourism industry. For more information on this important sector of the economy, visit our Internet site at:

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/bus_stat/tourism.htm

Released this week by BC STATS

- Business Indicators, June 1999
- Current Statistics, June 1999
- Tourism Room Revenue, Annual 1998
- Tourism Industry Monitor, Annual 1998
- Immigration Highlights, First Quarter 1999

Next week

- No subscription releases

BC STATS, Min. of Finance & Corporate Relations, Box 9410 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1
Tel: (250) 387-0327 Fax: (250) 387-0329 Web: http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca E-mail: BC.Stats@gems8.gov.bc.ca